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CARDIN, MIKULSKI RUPPERSBERGER ANNOUNCE BALTIMORE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS WON \$1.3 MILLION IN COMPETITIVE FUNDING FOR FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski**, and Benjamin L. Cardin, and Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (all D-Md.) today announced the Baltimore City Fire Department won \$1.3 million in competitive federal funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program to purchase firefighting equipment. As a member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Mikulski fights each year to increase federal funding for the fire grants program. Senator Cardin is a member of the Finance and Budget committees.

"Now more than ever, we need to make sure that our first responders have the resources they need to protect our families and communities," **Senator Cardin** said. "From fires to natural disasters to possible terrorist threats, these brave men and women put their lives on the line for all of us. Federal investment in our first responders is vital because we must ensure that they have the equipment and training they need to protect us from harm and to perform their jobs safely and efficiently."

"I know how important this funding is to Maryland communities – often it's the difference between life and death. First responders protect our homes and communities, and the federal government has a responsibility to protect them by providing them with the tools they need to do their jobs safer and smarter," **Senator Mikulski** said. "Every day when our first responders report for duty, they don't know what they will face. That's why I fight every year for the equipment, training, and staffing our protectors and communities deserve."

"When our firefighters arrive on the scene of an emergency, they often have no idea what is waiting for them behind that front door," Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger said. "These men and women put their lives on the line to protect us and deserve the best equipment available. This funding will help replace old, outdated breathing systems with new ones that will provide firefighters with life-saving air when they are in dangerous environments. This desperately-needed funding couldn't have come a moment too soon."

The grant funds will allow the Baltimore City Fire Department to purchase 310 new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) units, which allow firefighters to breathe inside smoke-filled buildings. The current SCBA units used by BCFD are more than twelve years old, and are

in need of replacement. For more information about the award, please contact Chief Kevin Cartwright, Public Information Officer, at 410-396-5616.

AFGP grants fund firefighting equipment, personal protection equipment, training, firefighting vehicles, firefighter/first responder safety projects, and staffing recruitment and retention, as well as public fire safety education.

Since 2001, Maryland fire departments and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) units have received more than \$94 million in AFGP funding, more than \$7 million of which has gone to the Baltimore City Fire Department.

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